

A

SERMON

PREACHED at

Mercers-Chappel.

On the 13th of JANUARY, 168⁸.



BY
TIMOTHY LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Tho. Cockerill*, at the *Three Legs* in the
Poultry, over-against *Stocks-Market*. MDCLXXXIX.

SERMON

PREACHED

At the Church of St. Andrew

On the 18th of January, 1697



TIMOTHY BISHOP OF OXFORD

LONDON

Printed for T. Cockfield, at the Black-Letter in the
Poultry over-against St. Andrew's Church

LEVITICUS XIX. 17.

*Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart ;
thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour,
and not suffer sin upon him.*

THAT we love the Brotherhood, and be kindly affectioned to one another, is the joint and concurrent Language both of Law and Gospel; It is one of those common Principles which are naturally engraven on the tables of the hearts of all men. The ways and methods of discharging our duty, and expressing our good will to Mankind, are various and different, they run in several channels; one is mentioned in my Text, viz. by fraternal correction; a necessary, but a much neglected Duty. We are very prone and forward to reproach our Brethren for their infirmities, and to make a mock at their sins; instead of going back, and throwing a Mantle over them, to hide and cover their nakedness; we rather draw the Curtain open, and with a secret titillation and pleasure expose them to the observation and contempt of the most scornful *Michael*: Instead of burying, and Christianly interring in silence, some of their slips and failures, men rather rake in the Grave, and tear up the Earth to give them an inglorious resurrection.

When we should privately address to our Brother with all imaginable Meekness, Pity, and Sobriety, to restore and recover him after some irregular step, or

unwary fall, men rather publicly proclaim and divulge on the House-top their Neighbours failing; and set it in such a light where it may most eminently be seen.

With what bitter taunts and cruel mockings, with what slanderous aspersions and defamations do men prosecute one another? Yea, to that height of wickedness have some advanced in these low-running dregs of time, that instead of being grieved that their Brother has done amiss, they could be glad if he had done much worse. My Friends, is not this a great fault? have we thus learned either of *Moses*, or *Christ*? This way of treating thy Brother will appear to be collateral Blasphemy, and virtual Murther: Let me shew you a more excellent way, by learning your Duty to him in the words of my Text:

Which Duty is expressed,

1. Negatively, *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart.*

2. Affirmatively, *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour.*

3. With an Argument and Motive persuading us to it; *And not suffer sin upon him.*

I shall not wear out my little time in accurate and Logical Analysing of the words, but shall consider them as an entire Doctrinal Proposition.

1. Neg. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart.*

A *Moses*: Thou shalt heartily love him, and do all good Offices to him, relating both to his Soul and Body.

This is to resemble God, who is always doing of good, and showing down his Blessings and Mercies on our Heads; nay, in this work of Brotherly Reprehension we resemble our Heavenly Father, who is said to *rebuke and reprove whomsoever he Loves*, Rev. 3. 19.

And

And if thou makest not Conscience thus to Love and affect him, thou art guilty of his Blood, and wilt be esteem'd, in God's account, his Murtherer; for he that *hates his Brother* is so, *1 John 3. 15.* And the Connexion of the Text to the former Verse, gives us full proof of it. Verse 16. *Thou shalt not stand against the blood of thy neighbour*; and this is one way of doing of it, by omitting rebuke. Well then, love thy Brother, get admission into his heart and bowels; not by the point of a Baionet, or the force of a Bullet, that is a very strange demonstration of our affection to him (which by some has been practised); but get into him by mild and soft counsels, by wholesom advice.

2dly, Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour.

Fail not at your peril; here's a plain injunction, no Man exempted, no corner to creep out at. It is not left to your will and pleasure; no Pleas and Excuses will serve your turn to justify your omission. Necessity is laid on thee, *Thou shalt in any wise do it: Thou shalt do it, Thou thy self, not by thy Deputy or Substitute.* Reproof is like the Peace-offering made by Fire, thine own hand must bring it, *Lev. 1. 17.*

Rebuke thy Neighbour.

Who is this Neighbour? It was a Question propounded to Christ himself, *Luke 10. 29.* The Solution may be gathered out of Christ's Answer.

1. In the General. Every Man to whom I may be helpful. Our Lord proves a Stranger may be a Neighbour, *Luke 10. 36.*

All people that have the face of Man are called our flesh, *Isa. 58.* And our blood, *Acts 17. 26.* One blood; Cousins at a remoter distance. Any Man is our Neighbour, in regard of the nearness of our first Original;

may, not only a *Stranger*, but an *Enemy* may thus be our Neighbour.

Dr. Hammond.

'Tis true indeed, that the Precept of *Moses*, concerning the kind dealing of the *Jews* with other men, extended not universally to all, but peculiarly to their Country-men or Fellow-*Jews*; as for Aliens and Enemies they were not bound to be kind to them; nay, against some, viz. the *Seven Nations*, they were commanded to proceed in an hostile manner. *Matt.* 5. 43. But our Saviour teacheth us to extend our kindness as the Blessings of Heaven, even to enemies and injurious provokers: In the same manner and measure as they do ill to you, do ye good to them, blessing, obliging, admonishing, reproving, praying for them, and making them no other returns for all their virulencies, and malicious behaviour toward you, but those of kindness and love, that so you may approve your selves to be the Servants and Children of the Most high God, and your Heavenly Father.

2dly, There are more especially Neighbours, who dwell near us, with whom we frequently converse, and have repeated opportunities of shewing our love in this kind to them. There are also,

3dly, Spiritual Neighbours, begotten by the same spirit, to the same hopes; these are to have a special preferment in our affections: They have the same God to their Father, the same Church for their Mother, the same House for their dwelling, and the same Inheritance for their portion.

3. And not suffer sin upon him.
There are various Readings of these words; some thus, *Do not burden thy self with sin for him*, Non sulcipes propter illum peccatum, i. e. Penam peccati.

Take

Take heed lest by thy silence thou bringest the guilt of his sin upon thee.

Through the silence of one, we often suffer two to dye, our selves and our erring brother. Sure I am, he that said, *If thy brother repent, forgive him*, said also before that, *If thy brother offend, admonish him*: And it is as great a sin, not to reprove our brother when he hath transgressed, as not to forgive him, when he hath repented. If we suffer sin upon him, we our selves may suffer for his sin. We neglect to do good, and so great evil comes of it.

But the most general and proper reading of the words is, as in our ordinary Translation, *Thou shalt not connive at him, and thereby embolden him to continue in his sin, augmenting the heap and number of his Transgressions, but shalt put a stop to him by seasonable and timely Reprehension*. Let no man tell me this is meer Morality, and prejudice himself against the benefit he should reap. As God in his Law; so Christ in his Gospel, doth peremptorily exact and call for our compliance with this Precept in several places: *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault*, Mat. 18. 15. *Woe them that are unruly*, 1 Thes. 5. 14. They are said to be full of Goodness, who have the ability to admonish one another, Rom. 15. 14. Ye count him as an enemy, whom you will not admonish as a brother. 2 Thes. 3. 15. *Reprove the unfruitful works of darkness*, Eph. 5. 11. It was a Law in Israel, That a man should not see his Brothers Ox or Ass fall down by the way, and hide himself from them. Doth God take care for Oxen? nay, for us are these things written. But alas! we are fallen into those latter days spoken of by our Blessed Saviour, wherein iniquity should increase, and the love of many wax cold.

What

What a sinful baseness doth attend us, sneaking shamefully from our work and duty of Reproof, when an hellish impudence is in some profligate Wretches, that with open face, and brazen brow daily make breaches on God's Royal Law! How quietly and unconcernedly can we see some violent sinners upon a full career in the broad way of Destruction, and never attempt to stop them, or throw in a bar or block to abate the swiftness of their feet, tho it be to the shedding of their own blood? Is this consistent with the Love of God? with the love of thy brother's invaluable soul? or the happiness and security of thine own?

Having by this short Paraphrase taken off what of mist and darkness might surround the Words, I should descend to an Enquiry into several Particulars, each of which would require more time to discourse of, than usually is allotted to Exercises of this nature; yet I shall not totally omit them.

As 1. I should state the nature of this Duty, and shew you wherein it doth consist.

2. On whom this Duty is most principally incumbent.

3. I shall demonstrate the great Necessity and Reasonableness of it.

4. I shall lay down some Rules and Directions how to manage it successfully.

5. I shall, lastly, Apply it.

In short, for the First Particular, I shall only take notice of Three Words in the Scripture, which sufficiently express the nature of Reprehension.

1. *Blasphemy*. A striking and beating of one. It denotes the vehemency and earnestness of Reproof.

The Gravity of some mens Persons, and the Eminency of their Station, do exempt them from blows of this nature; you may read the *Supersedeas* which some men have, 1 Tim. 5. 1. *Rebuke not an Elder, but intreat him as a father*; have respect to his Office, and deal not rigidly with him.

2. *Ensiula*, a more mild and gentle kind of increpation, yet join'd with some Acrimony, and tartness of Speech, 2 Cor. 2. 6. Thus *Peter* rebuked Christ, Mark 8. 32.

3. *Nuscia*, a bare minding, and remembering, a putting of the Mind in order by Advertisment and Admonition. This is the most fair and favourable course, the most likely to prove successful, that which primarily is to be used, the other only in extremities.

The Schoolmen give many definitions of it, and the Ancient Fathers abound with variety of Illustrations, telling us, that great is the Affinity between Soul and Body, both as to their Diseases and Remedies: That which Physick is to the Body, Reprehension is to the Soul, and the same rule and method must be observed in the application of the means of Cure. They reckon up three Parts of Physick, *διαιτα, φαρμακικη, χειρουργικη*, by Diet, Medicines, and Chyrurgery, all which by way of Analogy and Proportion, are to be used in the Cure of Spiritual Distempers. *Clemens Alexandrinus* compares them together.

1. *Admonition* (he says) is the *Diet* of the Soul, forbidding that which is simply hurtful, or contrary to the disposition of the Patient, and affording strong and wholesome nourishment.

2. *Re-*

2. *Reproof* is a *Medicinal* Potion, that hath always attending it a tang of bitterness, which purgeth out the Morbifick Matter, and all peccant Humors and Corruptions of the Soul, and is a great Restorative.

3. *Rebuke*, if sharp and keen, is the spiritual *Chyrurgery*, which sometimes is to be used cuttingly, with a sharp Point and Edge. *Intemperans ugar crudeliter facit Medicum*. Salt upon some occasions must be robb'd and chaf'd into some sores and wounds.

In short, Brotherly correction consists in giving our Brethren necessary instructions in matters they are ignorant of; in letting them have timely notice of their sinful Affections, and Inclinations; and in a total breaking off our intimacy of conversation, and society with them, if they prove stubborn and incorrigible, stopping their ears against all wise Charms.

I proceed now to the

II. Particular, To shew who are the Persons mostly concerned in the discharge of this Duty.

The better to understand this, you must know that Divines generally distinguish *Reproof* into *Ministerial*, and by way of Authority; and *Fraternal*, by way of Charity.

1. *Ministers admonish by way of Office*. The truth is, the work of *Reproof* belongs in some sort to all men who have the use of Reason, because it is a natural Precept, and a work of Mercy, a general Office due from one neighbour to another. Hence Infidels may reprove Believers; so *Abimelech* reprov'd *Sarab*, Gen. 20. 15. Thus Inferiors may reprove their Superiors, provided it be done with Modesty and Reverence. But principally this Duty is incumbent on three sorts of Persons.

I. On

1. On such who in regard of *Office* are obliged to take the charge and care of others, as Ministers and Dispensers of the Divine Oracles are.

2. On such who are engaged by bonds of *Nature*, and their Relative Stations and Capacities; thus Parents and Masters stand more especially concerned.

3. On such who are *qualified and fired with Parts and Gifts* to perform this Office with success.

It is a principal part of our Ministry to rebuke. Among Christ's Disciples one was stiled a *Son of Thunder*; and what was said of *St. Basil*, ought to be the Character of every faithful Steward in God's House, That he shoud'rd in his Doctrine, and lighten'd in his Life. If we look through all the Old Testament, you will find that most of the Prophets Messages were severe Rebukes and Threatnings. The Jews call the Book of *Deuteronomy*, the *Book of Objurgations*; and that Section which beginneth *Deut. 28. 15.* they call the *Section of Objurgations*. The necessity of this Duty is such to us, that God will require the blood of the People at the hands of their Pastor, if he reprove not. The Shepherd was bound to make good that which was stolen, as *Jacob* did to *Laban*. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their Transgression, and the house of *Jacob* their sin. *Isa. 58. 1.* 'Tis the Spiritual Father's charge to his own Son in the Faith, That he rebuke them that sin, before all, that others may fear. And this he must do without Partiality, not fearing the Eminent, nor being deter'd at the Greatness of any bold and open Transgressor.

Gen. 31.

39.

Isa. 58. 1.

1 Tim. 5.

20.

As this is required of Ministers chiefly, so it is expected and demanded of *Parents and Masters*; God hath made them Guardians of their Children and Servants. It is an idle conceit to think that we only are intrusted with the Cure of Souls; you will find it no excuse for your negligence and omission in the great day of giving up your Accounts at God's Tribunal; you are obliged to be keepers of their Souls, as well as we; nay, every man, in this sense, ought to be his Brother's Keeper. As God hath set Conscience to watch over the inward man, so, for the conversation, he hath set Christians to watch over one another. Suffer me before I proceed any further, to improve this.

Rev. 2. 2.

1. It should teach all Ministers to be faithful in their places, and to take care that no man muzzle up their mouths. See how the Holy Ghost commends the Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*; *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil*. Wicked men are sometimes intolerable, not to be endured or bore with. It is no breach of Patience to be impatient against sin and sinners.

It is said of *Suetonius*, that he took the same liberty in writing the Emperors lives, that they took in leading them. Wicked men take liberty to licentiousness in committing sin, let us take as great a liberty in reproving it, and let nothing either affright or allure us to a sinful connivance at their bold violations of God's Law. We must not be dumb, tho' they should use us as the thief doth a dog, hold out a piece of bread to bribe us not to bark.

2. This should teach the Great ones of the world to bear with Patience, and to receive with Meekness the word of Reproof. None are so high exalted as to be out of the reach of that Word which God speaks. None

None are more our friends than they are, who cannot stand by, and see us offer violence to our selves without holding of our hands. *Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oyl, which shall not break my head.* There may be smiting without violation of Friendship; and his wise Son Solomon prefer'd the wounds of a friend, before the kisses of an enemy. These may be pleasanter, but those will prove wholesomer; there is Treachery in these kisses, but in those wounds faithfulness. The Mother of Cyrus charged him who was to speak to the King, to express himself *verbis hyssinis*, in soft and silken terms. 'Tis true, sometimes we must come in the Spirit and Language of Love; but 'tis as true, there is oftentimes as great need of coming with a Rod in our hands, as a soft word in our mouths.

Psal. 141.

5.

Prov. 27. 6.

Bad men love not a Correcting Ministry; like them, Amos 7. 10. *The land is not able to bear all his words;* and ver. 13. *prophecie not again any more at Bethel;* for it is the King's chappel, and it is the King's court. *They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, (i.e. the Judge that punished sin) they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.*

Men will endure to hear new Notions and controverted Points; any Satyrical Reflections, and bitter Invectives against their brethren; but cannot brook to have their own Personal sins roughly handled. Be careful you do not *Galatizare* (as Tertullian phrases it) *bate him who tells you the truth;* nor be like those hearers mentioned Luke 4. 19, 21, 22, 28. While our Saviour preached the acceptable and glad tidings of Salvation, the good news contained in the Gospel, all the Congregation of Nazareth applauded his Doctrine, and ad-

mired at the blessed words which proceeded out of his mouth; but when he came to apply the word unto themselves, they were filled with wrath against him, thrust him out of the City, and would have broke his neck, by attempting to cast him down headlong from the brow of the Hill, v. 19.

Have a care you resist not such a Ministry, which awakens the Conscience, and sets the worm on gnawing, altho it should provoke thee to cry out with a loud voice, as he did who was possessed with an unclean Spirit, *Let us alone, we know thee, thou come to destroy us?* God doth manifest his Presence and mighty Power in such a sifting Ministry; and the nature of Sin is to make men afraid of God's Appearance, and foolishly with Adam to attempt the secreting of themselves from his All-seeing Eye. We are commanded *to exhort and rebuke with all authority*; and you are enjoined not to despise and siet against the Doctrine we deliver, and that on pain of Everlasting Damnation, *for he that hateth reproof, shall dye.*

Luke 4.
33, 34.

Tit. 2. 15.

Prov. 15.
10.

I proceed to the 2d Branch of Reproof, that which is *Fraternal*, and done in *Brotherly Charity*. Every private Christian may bear the *Person*, tho not the *Office* of a Reprover; and this is founded upon undeniable Grounds, too large to be insisted on at this time, in one single Sermon.

Whether we consult the Honour of God, or the necessity of a punctual conformity to his Will, not distinguishing his Commands, but obeying all equally; nor disputing any of them, but obeying all readily; it will appear to be our interest as well as our duty, presently to comply with God's Will and Pleasure: Or if

we respect the happiness and welfare of our Brother, exordising in this work the highest acts of charity and benevolence; for if he hear us, then we have gained *our Brother*. When thou hearest thy Neighbour swear, lye, slander, deride holiness, persecute with his Tongue the Man who is more righteous than himself, intreat him then to bethink himself what will be the end of such Devilish practices; shew him his danger, and snatch him, if it be possible, out of the fire he is hastning into. Thou hast a heart of Stone, if thou art not concerned, and industrious to prevent his everlasting ruine; for he is riding post to the Devil, if a stop be not put in his way. It is no privilege to any Man to be out of the way of a Reprover; but a severe judgment to be told they shall no more be smitten with this Rod. God, to punish *Judah* for their Rebellion, threatneth to impose silence on his Prophet. Let us make much of a blow and stroke of this nature, it carrieth healing with it. St. *Austin* gives two instances of the happy success of Admonition, the one given by himself to his Friend *Alipius*, who was thereby reclaimed from the Theatre and Stage-plays; the other by a taunt and cheek given to his Mother *Monica*, who was thereby reclaimed from her Tippling.

Ezek. 3. 26.

Lib. 6.
Conf. c. 9.

If we consult in the next place our own private weal and happiness, it will appear to be highly reasonable. Merely we prevent our being partakers of *others sins*; so that if our Brother perish, he perishesth to himself. This is the way to keep our selves pure from the blood of all men, by declaring to them the whole counsel of God. This is the way to entail God's Blessing on us: To them that rebuke, a good blessing shall come upon them. Nay, it is not only the way to procure God's

Acts 20.
26.Prov. 24.
25.

favour

favour, but Man's too. A well-given reproof will ingratiate the Reprover with the Reproved. *He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour, than he that flattereth with the tongue.* This is according to the former Observation, *Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.* If we hereby be so wise as to turn many to righteousness, we shall be so happy as to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. And one advantage more we shall gain, we hereby take a prudent course to provide for our selves a faithful Friend to perform the same kind office as occasion serves. There is no member in the mystical body of Christ, that may not need the assistance of another: The eye hath need of the hand, the hand of the feet. We were sometimes foolish and disobedient; And had not we Preachers and Friends to admonish us? Freely you have received, freely give. Thy heart is not right, if thou who wast a Stranger, cannot pity Strangers. Hereby also we should countermeine the Devil in two grand methods of his deceit; *viz. The multitude of sinners, and the Impunity of sin.* Reproof will abate the number of offenders, and shew the apparent hazard and danger men run by continuing in their sins. That impediment to the discharge of this Duty, *viz. Singularity*, would be taken off; weak Christians would be kept from being scandalized, and strong ones from being grieved. If these Considerations are not sufficient to shew us the necessity of taking up vigorous and speedy resolutions, to live no longer in the neglect and sinful omission of fraternal Reprehension, I know not what to add more that may prevail; But must leave such to some other, and I fear, more dreadful way of conviction, when it will be too late

late

late to retrieve the loss, either of their Brother or themselves. I am forced to wave my Answer to the particular Cavils and Excuses which many alledge for their discharge from this work. I therefore must come to the last particular propounded to be spoken to, which was,

The giving some *Directions and Rules* how to manage Reproof in such a manner, as that we rationally may expect we shall see it turn to account.

It is a great Art to do it aright, like the Husband-man's skill, which his God doth teach him. Every one can find fault and chide; but to reprove discreetly and effectually, requires much wisdom: *The words of the wise* Eccles. 12. *are as goads, and as nails fastened by the Masters of Assemblies.* 11.

And here I shall not multiply *Rules*; but among the great throng of them, which by many have been produced, shall select these few followings.

Rule 1. Let the Rebuker look to it, that he be free from that Sin which he condemns in another. *Blaise's* Conscience was pricked to the quick, from the consideration of the holiness and justice of the Baptist. Thus did *Samuel* deal with the people; first he clears his own Innocence, and then charges them with their Sin. God Honours his Servants in the Consciences of their greatest Enemies. To accuse a Man for Drunkenness, Coverousness, or any other sin, and yet to live in it thy self, What is this, but with *David* in *Nathan's* Parable, to pronounce the sentence of condemnation on thy self. With what a controuling, over-powering force did our Saviour rebuke the sins of the Jews, when he prefaced his Discourse with that bold Challenge, *Who*

is there amongst you that convinces me of sin? He that lives in the commission of that sin he condemns in another, must expect that his words will recoil upon himself, as a foul Gun doth in discharging. Let us so walk that our feet cast not dirt into our mouths. Many a favourable truth is hindered in its operation, by the stinking breath of him that delivers it. Every one desires, if he must be stricken, that it be by the hand of the Righteous. To see a Judas cast a Stone at a Covetous Man, a Pharisee at an Hypocrite, an Herod at an Adulterer, is a sight that creates laughter and contempt. None speak at so great an advantage, as they whose Hands are lifted up to God's Commandments, whilst their Tongues are rebuking the transgressors of them.

As the Reprover must look to it that he be faultless, so he must be sure that his Brother be faultless; for otherwise thou dost not reprove, but reproach him; and instead of being a Wise Admonisher, thou art an Hellish Accuser of the Brethren; thou dost not perform the Duty of a Christian, but dost execute the Office of the Devil. Two things must here be regarded:

1. That it be a *sin*; 2. That it be *his sin*; thou reprovest him for.

1. That it be a *sin*; Be sure he be a transgressor of the Law, before thou smite him with this rod. There must be a breach of some Command, Affirmative or Negative; directly, or by consequence; either the doing what he ought not, or the not doing of what he ought. To judge a Man for an Harband or Cuss, for a Lacer

or piece of Ribbon, for a Knot or a Feather. (as un-
 worth sort of men have of late done) smells rank of
 pride, censoriousness and uncharitableness. But alas!
 In what an Age do we live, where mens quarrels against
 one another shall take their rise from such minute and
 inconsiderable beginnings, that a wise Man is ashamed
 to name them, being as insignificant and unedifying,
 as he who studied Thirty years, whether *Virgil's* name
 should be written with an *V*, or an *E*.

Reprove not therefore thy Brother for things law-
 ful or indifferent, for trivial and undecided matters.
 Be sure you have good ground to proceed on. Beware
 of severe censures, and contentious debates. Many a
 matter that kindles unnatural heart burnings between
 Professors of Religion, when it comes to be scanned, and
 fully understood, proves either nothing at all, or at
 most, nothing to the purpose. It was the case of the
Reubenites. The Army of *Israel* was raised against
 them, nothing but War, Fire and Sword were threat-
 ned for their building an *Altar of Testimony* in their
 journey; when they met together, and had discoursed
 the matter, and came to a right understanding of their
 Brethrens end and intentions, they were presently re-
 conciled. Thus our Brethren suffer often through our
 ignorance; to such Reprovers we may say, what *Job*
 did to his mistaken friends, who upbraided him with
 hypocrisy; *How forcible are right words! but what doth*
your arguing reprove? Some conceive that *Jacob* un-
 derstood not the mystery of his Son *Joseph's* Dream
 (concerning the *Sun, Moon and Stars making obeisance*
to him) whence it came, and how it should be ac-
 complished; when he read his chiding Lecture a-
 bout it.

Josh. 22.

12.

V. 33.

Job 6. 25.

2. Look to it carefully that the thing be not only a *sin* you reprove him about, but that it be *his sin*. It was
 Isa. 11. 3. foretold of *Christ*, that *he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears*. Jealousies and conjectures, hear-says, fancies and reports, are not sufficient grounds for reproof. The Rule of Charity is, *Quisque presumitur quod bonus est, nisi constat de malo*. Thus we read, neither *Job's mourning*, nor *Christ's piping* could pass their hard censures; but the one has a *Devil*, and the other is a *Glutton, and Wine-bibber*.

Tho *Christ* came to fulfil the Law, yet there were that accused him as a destroyer of it. Tho he decided the Question fairly on *Cæsars* side, in the grand Case of Tribute and Custom, yet there wanted not those who charged him with disloyalty. How were the Apostles slandered as Seducers and Sectaries, Vain Bblers, and Hereticks, Broachers of new, false, and pestilent Doctrines, Presumptuous and Heady, Despisers of Dignities, and Promoters of Uproars, Riots and Routs, and Unlawful Assemblies. In succeeding times, if we read the Apologies of *Athemagoras*, *Tertullian* and others, it will amaze you to see with what villainous practices, and unnatural impieties they are charged; and no wonder, for if they called the Master of the House *Beelzebub*, how much more those of his household?

Because it was against Law to have Virgins strangled, *Tiberius* would have them first deflour'd, and then according to Law, (*alias humour, will and pleasure*) they must dye that death.

It is too much to abuse a good Man, as such; but first committ a rape on his Name, and your way is open to his Life and Fortune.

The

The poor *Protestants* of *Paris* must first be accused of a Conspiracy against the King, and then thousands together must be Butcher'd without mercy.

So Men, by misrepresenting, dress up their Brethren in the monstrous shapes of *Vultures* and *Harpies*, with Claws and Talons, as being well armed for Prey and Rapine; and then afterwards fall foul on them. Thus was *Hannah* reprov'd for Drunkenness, which she no ways could be guilty of, except large draughts of her own Tears should intoxicate her: She was far enough from a merry heart; her grief and sorrow did even break her heart, and she was overwhelmed with her distress.

Mistake not therefore thy Man and Mark, and bear not false witness against thy brother. Tho *David* will ever be registred in the *Albo Justorum*, and reckoned in the number of good men, yet his act of censuring unheard *Mephibosheth*, will ever be reckoned amongst his unjust Actions.

Potiphar was guilty of this injustice, by an over-hasty crediting his Wifes forged Tale against *Joseph*. A better course is prescribed. *Inquire and make search*, *Deut. 13.* and ask diligently, if it be Truth that is told. *14.*

Rule 3. Take care thy ends and intentions be sincere and upright in this work. For if they are not right, it will vitiate all thou dost in this or any other Duty of Religion, either to thy God, or thy Neighbour. Let nothing be done out of vain-glory, and a secret ambitious desire of observation and raising up a great name for thy self. Purge out that evil proud humour of contradicting and controuling others; avoid every thing that may be interpreted to be a design to dis-

grace and render thy Brother mean and contemptible in the eyes and apprehensions of his Neighbourhood and acquaintance. Look so it that all be directed to those glorious ends of God's Glory, the recovery of thine erring Brother, the satisfying thine own Conscience in the necessary discharge of thy Duty, out of hatred to sin, and a desire to suppress that in this untoward and evil Generation, and to promote universal Holiness throughout the World.

Rule 4. Let all Reproofs be managed with the greatest demonstrations and expressions of Charity and Love to their persons that may be. When you express your warmest zeal against their sins, be sure you utter in all your advice with soft Prefaces of good-will, pity, and real affections to them. The Heam tells us, Reproofs must not be given in hatred; they are bitter Pills, and should be wrapt up in Honey, that they may slip down the better. Many therefore have well advised it as a prudent course, to intermix their due Commendations with our Admonitions, whereby the reception of our Advice would be much facilitated. The dreadfulest and most solemn Censures of the Church of God, are not *Mortal* but *Medicinal*, and are appointed not for *Killing*, but for *Cure*. Our reproofs being thus temper'd with Love, will be like a Sword dip'd in Balsom, that woundeth and healeth at the same time. It was said long since by an Ancient Father, *Admonitio misericordia carens tortura est*. Do not put thy Brother on a Rack, and torture him with violent and continual repetitions of his guilt.

Rule

5. Rule, *Avoid all extravagancies of rage and passion, and let all be done in meekness and humility of mind.* Reproof, tho it ought to be warm, yet it must not be scalding hot. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* Michael the Arch-Angel when controverting with the Devil, shewed himself to be a pure Spirit, by the calmness of the debate, which was not managed with any excess of Passion. *Hard Arguments and Soft Words* should be yoked together.

Play not the part of an enemy under the mask of a friend, which is done by pretending to heal a wound in the *Conscience* of our brother, or to wash him clean from some blots and stains in his *Conversation*, but thou dost set and imprint some mark or brand of shame and ignominy on his *name*. This is the direction of the Apostle, *Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness*; Gal. 6:17. Deal as gently with a fallen brother, as thou would'st with a man whose bones are dislocated; for so much, say *Criticks*, the Metaphor in that place imports. *Elisba* did more with a *kiss*, than his man with a *staff*.

Consider not so much what you are able to say, as what your brother is able to bear. Use the Christian Art to suit and proportion your *Wine* to your *Bottles*; let not children have *strong mead*; nor grown persons *milk*; be sure it be what is most proper for their health and nourishment; what the stomach can well digest, and will not throw up again. Yet withal, remember to reprove with all *seriousness*, that they may know thou art in earnest. A trifling slight reprehension, like old *Elis* to his profligate Sons, (who only shook his head at them, when their heads rather should have been stricken

stricken off) What doth it signifie or avail? Oftentimes it doth more harm than good, and rather emboldens than reforms the Offender.

It is a piece of great Wisdom and Skill to commensurate our rebukes to the temper of the offender, and to the nature of his offence. Commonly we are either *too remiss* if we endeavour *Moderation*, or *too austere and rough* if we design *faithfulness*: But I think there is little need to caution any persons against overdoing in this kind, it is an Extreme few fall into, there being more danger in our *eye*, than in our *salt*, i. e. as one expresses it, in our *smooth words*, than in our *sharp rebukes*. I fear the greatest work that is done in this matter, is sowing of pillows under sinners elbows, when our duty should be quilting of thorns to lay under their backs, that when the bold and contumacious sinner retires to his Chamber, he may also retire within himself, and be kept awake in his bed here, that so his sleeping an everlasting sleep of death, and making his bed in unquenchable flames may be prevented. Command then thy brother in the name of God to bethink himself, to repent and reform, to read what the God of Truth and Justice has threatned against him if he do not amend and turn; fight him with this glittering Sword of God's Word, and 'tis the likeliest way to make his sins fall before thee, and to give up the Ghost.

There are several other weighty Directions relating to the prudent management of this important duty of Fraternal Rebuke, which I must pass by with a very little reference to them; that so as we ought to pray read, sing, and perform all Christian Offices with the Spirit, and with our Understandings also; so we may perform this in that manner, that it may not be a *saerl-*

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see of fools. Let us apply our selves to learn that Wisdom which is from above, so as to take the Sinner by a *holy craft and guile*, as the Apostle expresses it.

And here distinction should be made between the Persons and Crimes of Offenders, the proper Seasons, and the particular Ways and Methods of Reproof.

1. We must distinguish between the *Persons*. Of some we are to have *compassion, making a difference*. Making a difference between men in publick and private capacities; *Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.* Rough and unheven language is not to be used to them. *Shimei* said nothing more in substance to *David*, than *Nathan* did; but it was in a very scurrilous and railing manner. Tho we may *rebuke*, we must not *revile*. Difference must be made between the *tempers* of sinners. There cannot be an uniform proceeding with all, but we must vary according to their dispositions. Some men are like *Thorns*, which if gently touched, hurt not; but if you grasp them with an hard and unwary hand, they will fetch blood: Others are like *Nettles*, which if they are nicely and delicately handled, sting and prick, but if closely and roughly press'd and grasp'd, you may pull them up without pain or harm.

Before therefore you reprove a sinner, know whether he be a *Thorn* or a *Nettle*.

2. Difference is to be made betwixt their *Crimes*. As the Offence is great or small, so should the reproof be *sharp* or *mild*. There are Beams and Motes, Pimples and Plague-fores, Scratches and Ulcers. We must not hang a man for filching a pin or a rattle, and whip him gently and tenderly for Murther and Treason. As
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the Offence is more secretly, or more impudently committed, whether drunk in the Night in his Chamber, or at noon-day in the *Exchange*: Some sin publicly, the greater is their sin, and so should their shame, because they give the greater scandal; others sin more privately; our Reprehension in this case ought to be auricular, and there is no better Sepulchre than that of secrecy, wherein to bury his more hidden failings. There is no need of going to the House-top, when a Closet would be more proper. Thus we see, that tho' all sins want an equal Price and Merit for Atonement and Satisfaction, yet they require not equal severity in our Rebukes and Admonitions. Some must have Lenitives, others Corrosives. Superiors may be reformed by Exhortation, Equals by Friendly Admonition; and Inferiors (if in the highest form and chair of Scorners) by severe Reprehension. We must not indeed be fiery-hot in terrifying the meaner sort, and look upon the rich as that Mount which must not be touched. We must not talk one half in the language of *Canaan*, and the other in that of *Ashdod*; but let us go to work impartially, not executing the command, as *Saul* did against *Amalek*, when he spared the fat and chief, and destroyed only the poor and refuse. This made that excellent Emperor *Theodosius* have so great a value for St. *Ambrose*, because he was not affrighted with the huffing of the Proudest, and had great compassion to the souls of the poorest.

3. We must make a difference in the seasons of Reproof; *There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent*. It is difficult here to assign the *modia sandi tempora*, the soft Articles and Opportunities wherein we are to speak, because variety of Circumstances may alter the

the case; only all must agree to do it as soon as conveniently we may. Delays harden. As we must *exhort*, so we must *rebuke* daily, *Heb. 3. 13.* Suffer not sin to lye upon him, nor he in his sin one day longer, if it be in your power to help it. But especially avoid thy rebuking of him, when he is like the wild Ass, with whom there is no meddling while she is in the heat and fervour of her lust, *Jer. 2. 24.* but she hath her particular month to be taken in. *Abigail* deferred to reprove *Nabal* in his Wine; she let him sleep it out, thinking the best time to give him this Physick, would be when he was fasting in the Morning. Good Physicians evacuate not the body in extremity either of heat or cold. Watch when thy Brother is *himself*, nay, *more than himself*, humble, tender, and pliable, then he is indeed a qualified recipient. Such are times of Affliction and Fear, Sicknes and impending Chastisements. But do not under pretence of a more convenient season, totally neglect and shift off thy Duty.

4. We are to make difference in the ways and methods of reprovng; sometimes *plainly and directly*, as *Nathan* to *David*, *Thou art the man*; at other times more *covertly*, by intimation and circumlocution. The Sun keeps the world in good temper, by moving in an oblique Circle; and Ships (Mariners say) sail best, and make the greatest way with side-winds.

I crave leave only to Apply what has been said in these following ways, when I have laid down this single Caution, *viz.* That tho Reproof is then best taken, when it is best given, (according to those Directions now given) yet no man must reject it, because the Reprover wants those due Qualifications to render him every way meet for his work. Good Counsel from a bad

man must not be slighted; *Balaam* was a bad man, yet he had a good wish, and uttered a most excellent Prophesie. A diseased Physician may prescribe good Medicines; a lame Steward may distribute his Masters Alms: Ungrounded is that Doctrine both of the *Romanists* and several others, who tell us, That the Benefit of God's Ordinances depends upon the goodness and *right intentions* of the Priest and Minister. What, shall I not be saved by hearing, unless the Preacher be saved, whom I hear? Is the Grace of God tied to the Ministry of man? Shall the Servant share the Honour, and part stakes with his Master? Our Lord and Great Prophet taught the people to observe their Doctrines that sate in *Moses Chair*; tho without breach of Charity he called them Serpents and Hypocrites. *Sampson* did not disdain the Sweets, because he found them uncleanly laid in the Lions Carkass. His diet was strict enough, he might not eat that which favoured of Legal Impurity, yet refused not a Honey-comb, because found in the belly of a dead Beast. Honey is Honey, tho in a dead Lyon.

Having inserted this necessary *Caution*, I shall in the Close, subjoin Two or Three Things by way of *Inference*, *Reproof*, and *Advice*, by way of more particular

Application.

1. I hence *infer*, That if it be the Duty of Ministers, Parents and Governors of Families to give *Reproof*, then it is the Duty of People, Children, and Servants to take it. You are as much obliged to have a willing *Ear*, as we are to use a faithful *Tongue*. But
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woe unto us! we have stopp'd our ears against the loud and reiterated Rebukes of Heaven. God at sundry times, and divers manners hath both in times past spoken, and still doth speak in very Reprehensory Language, and has let us know his mind in very broad and legible Characters; so that if we were upon the wing, flying, or on our feet running, we may plainly read it. There are four ways, in a more singular and eminent manner, by which God has reprehended us.

1. By his Word.
2. By our Consciences.
3. By the Examples of Good Men.
4. By his Judgments on Bad Men.

1. By his Word; That is profitable for *reproof*; for *2 Tim. 3.* reproof of Errors and false Doctrines; for *correction* of *16.* sin and evil manners. Every one that doth evil, hates this sacred Torch, *neither cometh to this light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.* Moreover by them (i.e. by thy Statutes) *is thy servant warned.* But men seal up this Book to themselves, and spend more time in Romantick Discourses, than in these Sacred Oracles. *Joh. 3. 20.*

2. He reproves by our own Consciences. How often do they check and chide us? 'Tis said of David, as soon as he had cut off the lap of Saul's Garment (*his heart smote him*) that is, his Conscience recoil'd upon him. Conscience is the great Register and Recorder of the World; it hath the Pen of a ready writer; not a word or thought escapes its swift Pencil. It is God's *Historigrapher*, which writes not only *Annals*, but *Diaries*; it hath its Book and Table, wherein it indelibly writes mens Transgressions and Swervings. It is man's

private Notary; his Bailiff to arrest him, and seize upon every miscarrying habit and act. It is his Judge, sifts and scrutinizes the Offender, convicts and then condemns the Malefactor; Their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. And how many secret Lectures hath this read to us? What Artifices have we used to rock it to sleep? Play and Gaming, Musick and Feasting, Company and many diversions of the same nature, have been cast in to still this importunate and offensive babler, whose tongue will never lye still.

3. God reproves by the *Examples of Good Men.* Noah condemned the old world for their security, by his preparing an Ark. A good man leads a *convincing life*, and there is an *Elenctical Power* in his holy deportment. Rev. 14. 1. Those that stood with the Lamb, had the *Father's* name in their foreheads, as *Holiness to the Lord* was upon the High Priest's. We must answer not only for sinning against the Light of God's Word, and our own Conscience, but the light of good example also. The faithful are called *Witnesses*; so *Let* witnessed against the sins of his age. A Good Man's life is the best Scripture-Commentary, and hath a *Magnetical Virtue*, a hidden Excellency to allure to Goodness. The Godly shine like Phil. 2. 15. *Lights* in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.

4. God reproves by his *Judgments on bad men*; he reproves both by his *Word* and *Rod*, as by the *testimony of his mouth*, so by the *works of his hands*. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked. That act of destruction was a smart Reprehensory Lecture to them; they were taught with Briars and Thorns. God will get his lessons in at mens backs, if they will not kindly receive them at their ears; he will whip them

them into better manners, and shew them their faults by their stripes. Reproof is frequently in Scripture put for chastisement. 1 Chron. 16. 21.
Psal. 16. 21.
Psal. 39. 11.

Lot's Wife was turned into a Pillar of Salt, looking back contrary to God's command; and that this *Pillar of Salt* was for the seasoning of all that would cast an eye behind to *Sodom*, appears by our Saviour's general application of it, *Remember Lot's wife.* Luke 17.

Remember, What? Not so much the *Miracle*, which every cursory Reader of the Scripture has at his fingers ends; and poor Children, like Parrots, can recite to you; but Remember the *Moral*, the *Doctrine*, and *Instruction* which lies more covertly under it. *But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel.* Jer. 7. 12.

The Ancient Philosophers (as *Gellius* noteth) assigned Three Grounds for punishment of offenders:

1. That which is called *Nūdus*, when punishment was inflicted for amending of the party punished, and to put him in mind of the committed offence.

2. The second they called *Tuenda*, for preservation of the honour of him against whom the offence was committed, lest indulgence should occasion contempt of his figure and dignity.

3. They call'd *Flagitiorum*, when an Offender was punished for Example sake, to deter others from the like offence. Some notorious Malefactors are hang'd up in Chains to warn and affright others. This was the aggravation of *Belshazzar's Pride*, that he *bumbled* not his heart, tho he knew the judgment inflicted on his Father for the same sin. Dan. 5. 22.

Mark.

Zeph. 3.
6, 7.

Mark God's own method of Arguing. *I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate, I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear me: thou wilt receive instruction: so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings.*

The ordinary word the Greeks used for punishment was *megethos*, which signifies Example, because there is not a punishment on one, but it should be an example to all; so the publick putting away a Wife that was found faulty, is called, *megethos*, to make her a publick example.

Mat. 1. 19.

Cambyses flayed off the skin of a corrupt and warping Judge, and spread it over the Seat of Judgment for his Successors to tread on, that so it might be a continual Monitor to them to avoid injustice.

God will not endure a succession in wickedness; and to prevent exemplarity, reproves many in this way, to give a check to the boldness of others in sin.

How often his methods in all these ways of Reprehension have been used with us, I leave it to your selves to judge; and how often we have defeated them, God well knows, and will judge us for them: which leads me to a second branch of my Application, I mean, from a Doctrine of Reproof, to descend to a Second Use of Reproof.

a. When we compare God's Precept with our Practice, What bad Comments are they on so blessed a Text? We may well cry out with our Country-man *Linacre*, *Aut hoc non est Evangelium, aut nos non sumus Evangelici*: Either this is not Gospel, or we are not Gospellers.

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We ramble dreadfully from the Text; the meanest Preacher may easily keep closer to the *Sense* of it, than the generality of Professors do to the *Practise* of it.

Instead of taking this wise and honest course of *fraternal correction*, we have used our selves to an accursed and odious way of *fraternal defamation*.

Two Beasts walk much up and down (*which Diogenes* advised the *Emperor* to avoid, being malignant biters) the *same beast* the *Flatterer*, and the *wild beast* the *Slanderer*: As the *Jews* conspired against *Jeremiah*, so do many against their Brethren and Neighbours, saying as they, *Let us smite them with the tongue, let us devise devices against them.* Jer. 18. 18.

If to Rail and Lye, Censure and Revile, to Misreport and Misrepresent, were fulfilling the Commands of God, and paying our Duty to our Brother; if they were Rules of Behaviour and Conversation, the generality of men might chime in with that young Gentleman in the Gospel, and say after him, *All these have I kept from my youth upward.*

They hate their brother in their heart, and shew it in these following ways:

i. By industriously searching out what is culpable and blame-worthy in them, on purpose to disgrace and reproach them. Of this the *Psalmist* complains, *They search out iniquities, they accomplish a diligent search.* Psal. 64. 6. It is a sad sign and indication, that malice is boy'd up to a great height in mens hearts, when they are so inquisitive and studious to find out articles of impeachment against their Brother, and proud (*as they who have obtained great spoil*) when they have made a fresh discovery of some crime in him.

Luke 11.
53.

2. Men discover their *hatred of their brother*, by tempting him to the *commission* of that sin which they design to make matter of *objection* against him. Thus the malicious *Pharisees* did their utmost to cause Christ to offend (*if it had been possible*) *urging him vehemently, and provoking him with all their little artifices, to speak of many things, that they might accuse him.* They asked him many a captious question to make him an offender for a word.

3. Their hatred manifested by magnifying and aggrandizing their Brethrens faults, swelling and improving every Mole-hill to the size and bulk of a Mountain. With their viperous and poysonous breath, they blow up every bubble (which at first was but a drop of Water stuf with a small vapour) to the dimensions of a large Globe. Some think themselves excusable herein (if not commendable) as thereby discovering their zeal against sin, which never can be made to appear sufficiently *sinful*: But let such beware, lest upon scrutiny it should be found a *bitter zeal*, having more of malice at the bottom, than any true concern for God's Glory, or their Brethrens good.

Deut. 27.
24.

4. And *Lastly*, Men discover their hatred of their Brother, by mentioning their failures and infirmities with some secret kind of rejoycing and pleasure. What self-satisfaction do many take, and without any uneasiness, can hear a discourse of twice the length of any Sermon, if the subject affect the reputation and good name of their nearest Neighbours? A sad sin, tho little laid to heart. *Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly.*

This renders a Man like the Devil himself, and transforms him into an *Angel of darkness*; this involves

us in the guilt and breach of many a Commandment; Five of the second Table are often at once violated: That *Honour* we should give to our *Fathers*, our *Governours*, and *Superiours*, is with-held. We are also dipt in *Blood*, and guilty of *Murther*; for he that hates his Brother, wishes he were not; Hatred extends it self to the extirpation and non-existence of the thing hated, and therefore it is *Heart-Murther*; thou dost kill him in thy thoughts, tho for many external considerations thou art restrained from padding in his Blood with thy hands; thou art loth to be hang'd for thy Fact. A *Rape* also is committed on his Name, and thou canst not excuse thy self from a reductive breach of the *seventh Commandment*. As for the *eighth* and *ninth*, they are apparently broke. Thou art a notorious *Thief* and *Robber*. Your Brother's good name is by *Solomon* prefer'd before *precious Oyntments*. Oyntments in ancient times were a special part of the *Royal Treasure* of Princes. When *Hezekias*, in ostentation of his *Royal Wealth*, and the *Magnificence* of his *Treasures*, would shew the *Babylonish Ambassadors* his choicest Collections, among the chiefest things there are reckon'd in the Inventory, the *precious Oyntments*. Some Ecc. 7. 1. 2 Kings 20. 13. tell us out of *Pliny*, That there were Oyntments in the Apothecaries Shops of that value, (so great was the Riot and Luxury of those times!) that every Pound amounted to more than Twelve Pounds of our Money, if they rightly compute the value of the *Roman Penny*. A great rate surely, if we consider the time wherein he lived, about 1500 years since. He had been a notorious Robber, who should steal any considerable quantity of such costly Ware. And is not He a worser Thief,

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injuriously and feloniously takes his Neighbour's good Name from him, which is by the *Wise Man* adjudged to be *better than any Ointment*, consisting of the most costly Ingredients? Let us have no fellowship with these Slanderers, Tale-bearers, and Whisperers, but rather reprove them; which we then effectually shall do, when we will not allow our selves to be *Receivers* to these *Thieves*, nor *Abettors* of these *Murderers*, by setting our Ears open to these Calumniators and Detractors. The *Tale-bearer* is the great Patron and Encourager of the *Tale-bearer*. Receive not stollen Goods, and you'll spoil the Thiefs Trade. What great difference is there to be found betwixt him who has the *Devil in his Tongue*, and the other who has the *Devil in his Ear*?

A *venomous Tongue*, if it be not match'd with an *easy, credulous, and itching Ear*, can never make any considerable earnings of it. Beware therefore of this Snare of the Devil, of reporting with some kind of delight the worst thou canst find in thy Brother, overseeing wilfully the many commendable qualifications he is endowed with. We are too like the old *Criticks*, who had all *Homer's* imperfect Verses in memory, but could not repeat any of those Excellent in their kind. My Friends, are we not here highly concerned? With what a gusto and relish do many report (if not raise) Stories and Fables that may any ways derogate from the good Name and Reputation of those who dissent from them? What (say they) do you not hear what such an one hath said; or what the other hath done? We tell smiling, what *St. Paul*, or any other right-complexion'd Christian, could tell no otherwise than weeping. They would mix tears with their words. Is this to be rightly affected
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with other Mens breaches of God's Statutes? Is this the right method of conquering your otherwise-minded Brethren? *Is this your rejoicing in good?* It was a great fault among some of the *Corinthians*, that when they heard of the scandalous sin of the *Incestuous person*, they were *puffed up*, when they should rather have *mourned*. 1 Cor. 5. 2. There were great Divisions and Parties amongst them at that time when the Incest was committed, and the contrary Faction thought they had an advantage against the whole Party, and this puffed them up, and they started the discourse of it in all Companies they came into. Verily this is a great fault amongst us; to throw thy Brother into the Dirt, and then stand strutting upon him, and crowing on his back while he is wallowing in the Mire; This is a posture fitter for a *Devil* than a *Christian*. For, I beseech you, in what one thing can a Man approach nearer to the similitude and likeness of that Evil Spirit, than in the rejoicing at that Wickedness which is committed in the World; especially for them to be guilty of it, who by their *Holy Office and Calling* are more particularly obliged to the observation of the aforementioned Rules of Reprehension? It is a Crime inexcusable. It is no wonder to see wicked and profligate Wretches priding themselves in their professing others to their own practise, when they *make or find* some in their own likeness; but yet in them it is the height of Wickedness to glory either in their own, or other Mens shame. *Lamech* indeed did thus. Thus Gen. 4. did *Alexander Pbaricus*, who consecrated that Javelin wherewith he had slain *Polyphron*; and *Protagoras*, who boasted he had spent forty years in corrupting of Youth. Thus *Mark Anthony* disgorged a Book concerning his

own abilities in Gluttony and Drunkenness. *Johannes a Casa* wrote a Poem in commendation of those Spanish *Virtues* (as one stiles them) *Whoredom, Sodomy, and Incest*. But for men making a more strict Profession of their subjection to *Divine Revelations*, and all *Moral Principles*; for such whose Character loudly calls on them, as the more immediate Servants of the Lord, not to strive, but be gentle to all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, avoiding all things that do gender strifes, to follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace. To reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering, thereby giving proof of their Ministry. For these to be found deficient, is a doubled and multiplied Iniquity.

1 Tim. 2.
22, 23, &c.

2 Tim. 5.

Give me leave to be plain, and a little more particular. I am sorry to see men of this Rank so to unhallow and profane their own venerable Office, that one would think in their Orders they received an *unholy Spirit*, and *Fire*, in the very literal sense of the words, without the relief of Figure or Metaphor. But it spreads farther abroad. The Mouths of most stand half-cock'd, ready to discharge at their Brethren in loud Volleys of Contumelies, and false Reports; nay, some there are, who, if they were *Bastisks*, as they are *Vipers*, would stab their Brother to death with their Eyes. *Father, forgive them, though they know what they say and do!* What strange Accusations of late have been charged on such whose Souls abhorred to enter into any such *Secresies*! *viz. That they are Popishly inclined, Promoters of Addresses of Abhorrence; that they have covenanted to pull down all Bulwarks that have been erected for the Defence and Safeguard of the Protestant Religion!*

In Defence of several within the compass of mine own knowledge, I will adventure to say thus much: These Evidences might with as much Reason and Honesty have sworn them to have been nurs'd up with the Milk of a Tygres or Bear; that they came into the World vested with the Skins of *Porcupines*, full of Darts and Spikes, to squirt out at pleasure at Mankind; That for their Religion they are *Turks* and *Jews*, *Pagans* and *Idolaters*, yea and that of the worst sort also; that they are *Canibals*, and eat nothing but Mans Flesh; and that their drink is a warm draught of Human Gore; That they were in a Plot to cut the Throats of their nearest Relations, and had signed an Obligation to the Devil, written with their own Blood, That after a small space of time, wherein they were to accomplish the aforesaid Designs, they should tamely surrender themselves to that *Evil One's* disposal and mercy. If this be thought to be spoken with too keen an edge, I have only this to add in justification of it: Those I speak of were never such Admirers of the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance*, as to suffer all the Dirt and Offal that could be raked out of Kennels and Common-shoars to be plaistered on their Faces, without lifting up of a hand to wipe it off. *Their rejoicing is this; the testimony of their Consciences*, that they have had their Conversation in the World with more Integrity and Godly Sincerity than these men will allow them; and can say that humbly and thankfully, which the *Pharisee* said falsely and haughtily, *God we thank thee, we are not like Men as such report us to be.*

III. *Use.* Let us all suffer a word of Exhortation to be added to a word of Reproof. And here I beg it heartily, that men would erect a *Court of Inquisition* in their own breasts, and *cite and try themselves before themselves*. Put these Questions home, and give Conscience leave to answer with all imaginable freedom.

Are we Lambs, or Wolves; Doves, or Vultures, and Birds of Prey?

Don't our Language betray us?

Do we know what Spirit we are of?

We all do impropriate the Name of *Evangelical*, Christians and Professors of the Gospel: but let us all take heed that we deal not with the Gospel as the Jews did with the Law, who carry'd it along with them in their *Cloaths*, but not in their *Hearts*; so we have it in outward Profession, but express it poorly in Heart and Life.

How ridiculous is it for men to have Names and Appellations which they do not in the least answer! How absurd is it to be called *Christians*, and yet not to have the spiritual *Anointment* of Heavenly Graces upon us!

There are some, as *Salvian* expresses it, are *Christians sine Christo*. Our Names should be indicative of our Natures, otherwise thou art a Christian by an *Antiphrasis*. It is noted of the *Roman* Bishops, that they have been very ridiculous in their choice of Names at their Creation: A *Coward* would be called *Leo*; a *Cruel* one, *Clemens*, or *Urbanus*; an *Impious* one, *Pius*; a *Carnal* one, *Celestinus*; a *Loose* one, *Severus*; a *Deformed* one, *Formosus*; and a *Devil*, *Eugenius*. Let men either live as they are called, *Christians*; or be called as they

they live, *Pagans*. Art thou called a Believer? shew it by thy Faith. Art called a Saint? shew it by thy Holiness. A Disciple? shew it by thy Knowledge. Are ye called Brethren? shew it by your Love, and shew your Love by your regard to this Precept of God's in my Text: *Let your Speech and Reproof be always with Grace, seasoned with Salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* Col. 4. 6.

Christianity of all Religions is the meekest and most humble; 'tis founded upon the Blood of Christ, who is a Lamb slain; 'tis confirmed and sealed by the Spirit of Christ, who descended like a gull-less Dove; Our God is a God of Peace and Love, and will not be served with wrathful Affections.

Doth the God of Heaven need a Tongue set on fire of Hell? Have I need of Madness, faith *Achish*? Will our Saviour always stand in need of Asses? I mean off such who are destitute of that Wisdom which is from above, which is characterized to be first pure, and then peaceable. There are some sorts of Men, whom we may bray in a Mortar, and yet they have their sensitive faculty, their folly will not depart from them. They still either stabber or foam at the mouth; they shall either flatter or rage.

If I were addicted either to *Invectives* or *Satyrs*, I am sure I have here scope enough: But I will withdraw my hand, lest I should seem to involve my self in the guilt of that Sin which this Discourse was primarily design'd against.

I shall conclude with the last Branch of my Application; which is,

Thirdly,

Fourthly, Exhortatory, and by way of Admonition.

If thou must not refuse to afford thy helping hand to a *fallen Beast*, withdraw it not from a *fallen Brother*: Put on Bowels which are Humane, and highly improved by the Doctrine of Christ, who hath furnished us with Arguments beyond all contradiction, to enforce our Duty. If we love God or our selves, we must not hate our Brother. Whose Eye doth not weep, whose Heart doth not ache, to see the Misery of such a person, whom nothing cooler than unquenchable burnings, and nothing lighter than the heavy strokes of an incensed and Almighty hand, can make sensible of their sinful Omissions of this nature?

We must all cry *Guilty* at our *Arraignment* and *Indictment* for our *Copartnership* with others in their Offences: we have not prevented that Sin we have had fair Opportunities to crush in the very Egg. *Jeroboam made Israel to sin*: But how? He neither forbid them by Word, nor prevented them by Example.

It is said, *St. Peter* compelled the Gentiles to *Judaize*. How did he so? Not by what he *preached*, but by what he *practised*: They sinned after the similitude of their Spiritual Father's Transgression. How many *Transgressors have we beheld, and never grieved because they kept not God's Word*? Doubtless not to do Good, is to do Evil. We have Sins enough of our own to answer for. *Our Father died in his own Sin*, said *Zelophehad's Daughters*. Our own Sins are sufficient enough

enough to our Ruine, we need not the *additional* aid of other Mens; yet we every day call in for fresh Contributions to our own personal Transgressions, and no way more than this, by *connivence* at the Miscarriages and Transgressions of others, to whom we are sufficiently enough authorized to give check.

Be not therefore deterred from your Duty, because your habitual neglect of it has been of so long standing. You must force your selves against all presenting Difficulties; the Objections of your own *Singularity*, and the reprov'd Sinners *Obstinacy*, must not be entertained, but repelled with all Christian Resolution. I acknowledge it is no easie matter to bear a Reproof well, tho never so well administred. No Sugar can bereave a Pill of its natural bitterness; and it fares with Offenders, as with those who are awakened out of their sleep, they are unquiet, and ready to brawl at their best Friends. Dogs in a chase will sometimes bark at their own Masters. There are few like the Woman of *Samaria*, who lov'd *Christ* the better for finding her out in her sin. But remember, *thy Lord will be ashamed of thee, if thou art of him*; and whoever is ashamed of his *Commandments*, is ashamed of his *Lord* that enacted them. If They can boldly *sin*, why should not We boldly *reprove*? Only Sin is truly shameful; and it is a very commendable importunity to sollicite men to be kind to themselves, and to *disturb* them till they consult their own *Everlasting Rest*. For fear of offending thy *Brother*, wilt thou resolve to offend *God*? Whose displeasure is most to be dreaded, *God's* or *Man's*? Remember he is far from being

impertinent, who will not suffer his Brother undisturbedly to go to Hell: He is far from being a base body, who engages himself to save his Brother who is on the brink of Ruine. To be employ'd where God calls, is sufficient Commission for any man to act upon. Do your Duty, leave the success to God, who has promised to bless his own Institutions. Resolve upon a speedy complying with your Duty. Life is uncertain; He may die who wants our Reproof. We may die who are to give it, and so be out of the reach of our Charity. Our Mouths and Ears will in a short compass of time be stopp'd with *ashes*. Do not therefore persist in the neglect of this Duty any longer. Omissions will damn as certainly as Commissions; and it is all one whether we go to Hell for *one Sin or many*. Be not therefore too thrifty of thy Tongue, when a word may do much good. We are not born all to ourselves, but somewhat to our Brother, Neighbour, and Friend; and we are guilty of the loss of that Soul we might save, and do not.

I am sure (*with the Apostle*) that *He cannot love God whom he hath not seen, who loves not his Brother whom he hath seen, and can endure to see miserable.*

In being thus Friends to others, we chiefly befriend *our selves*; and never let us think much of our pains, when we are rewarded with so great Blessings for our Work.

Now

Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord *Thet 3.*
Jesus Christ, make you to increase and abound in love *11, &c.*
towards one another, and towards all men; to the end
he may establish your hearts unblamable, in Holiness before
God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus
Christ with all his Saints. Amen.

F I N I S.
